DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 394 860 SO 025 180

TITLE	Voicing Support for the Arts.
INSTITUTION	Arts Midwest, Minneapolis, MN.
SPONS AGENCY	Ameritech Foundation, Chicago, IL.
PUB DATE	91
NOTE	25p.; For related document, see SO 025 179.
AVAILABLE FROM	Arts Midwest, 528 Hennepin Ave., Ste. 310, Minneapolis, MN 55403.
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Advocacy; *Art Education; *Financial Support; *Grants; *Policy Formation; Political Issues; Politics; Public Policy; Social Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS	*Grassroots Movements; United States (Midwest)

ABSTRACT

This report proposes 40 specific steps that can be taken to strengthen arts advocacy efforts in the region of the United States. Some steps can be taken immediately; others may take time to realize. There are five primary areas of recommended activities in this strategy, with simple "how to get started" instructions: (1) "State-by-State Action Plans"; (2) "Internal Organization and Communications"; (3) "Constituency Outreach and Mobilization"; (4) "Government Outreach"; and (5) "Publicity." The report states five long-term goals obtainable through these steps: (1) develop a broad-based grassroots field organization that can be activated to promote the arts on a long-term basis as well as protect funding; (2) increase and broaden support of public funding for the arts; (3) mobilize this broadened support; (4) develop natural linkages with other interests, such as education and tourism, to promote cooperative efforts on behalf of the arts; and (5) keep the arts highly visible in order to prove their fundamental role in people's lives and their deserved nurturing through government grants. (DQE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 394 860

SO 025 180

Voicing Support for the Arts

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL
IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Susan T. Chandler

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ARTS MIDWEST

Arts Midwest

Voicing Support for the Arts

This publication is part of a project funded by a $250,000 grant from the Ameritech Foundation to strengthen the arts in the Great Lakes region. The Ameritech Foundation was established in 1984 to complement the broad-based contributions activities of the subsidiaries of Ameritech, the Chicago-based parent of five Bell companies and several other information industry businesses. The Foundation supports regional and national programs with emphasis on economic development, public policy, and ways that communication can contribute to society and the quality of life.

The project was also supported by the generous contribution of services from Jasculca/Terman and Associates, Inc. Jasculca/Terman is a Chicago-based public relations firm specializing in public affairs and government relations.

Arts Midwest is a multi-state, public-private partnership supporting the arts and culture of the Midwest. Its mission is to advance the cultural development and promotion of the Midwest and the exchange of cultural resources regionally, nationally, and internationally. Arts Midwest offers programming in Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Jazz, and Leadership Development, for artists and arts organizations throughout Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

© 1991 by Arts Midwest

Printed in the United States of America

Arts Midwest
528 Hennepin Avenue, Suite 310
Minneapolis, MN 55403
612/341-0755

Report Contents

The Project's Challenge	1
Preface	3
Introduction	4
Case Statement	5
Situation Analysis	7
Obstacles	7
Opportunities	8
Goals	10
Strategies	11
State-by-State Action Plans	11
Internal Organization & Communications	11
Constituency Outreach & Mobilization	13
Government Outreach	14
Publicity	16

The Project's Challenge

This publication has its origins in a project begun in 1988 when John Koten, the President of the Ameritech Foundation, invited to Chicago a small group of arts leaders from the Midwestern states served by Ameritech companies: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Mr. Koten had been an active arts patron and a member of the board of several local and national cultural organizations, including the Illinois Arts Alliance and the American Arts Alliance. He was deeply aware of the vital importance of arts and cultural programming within a community and, with his leadership, the Ameritech Foundation had committed significant resources to help nurture the growth of the arts in Chicago and the Midwest.

The Ameritech Foundation recognized, as did the other participants in the Chicago meeting, that the arts were seriously undercapitalized in our country. There was further recognition that the kind of funding growth required to make the arts truly integral to our many communities could never be derived — as had been suggested throughout the eighties — solely from increases in corporate or foundation support. Facing the arts was a critical need to strengthen the financial commitment of the public sector, especially at the state level.

As arts leaders and funders, we all knew that to build such commitment state arts agencies and their advocates would have to do much more than have a few well-worded conversations with key state legislators. We needed to organize our various constituencies into more of a "movement" which, first of all, believed in the value of the arts and, second, was highly motivated, willing, and able to take positive and informed action on behalf of increased public funding for the arts.

It was understood that this would be no simple undertaking. Most state arts agencies invest the bulk of their time and financial resources in trying to meet the overwhelming needs of artists, arts organizations, and arts educators. There has traditionally been little left over with which to tell the story of their efforts. Hence, while the residents of a small town may enjoy the performances of their community theater or the touring jazz ensemble or an artist in their children's schools, they may have no understanding at all that their state arts agency — and hence their very own tax dollars — helped make the event possible.

The Ameritech Foundation took the lead in exploring a solution to this challenge. Late in 1988, Ameritech awarded a grant of $250,000 to Arts Midwest (serving as fiscal agent and project manager on behalf of the ten-partner state arts agencies and arts advocacy organizations), to support a project which had two goals:

- To effectively communicate the understanding that the arts are central to the lives of all people and communities within Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin;

- To develop a more complete understanding of the appropriateness of public sector support of the arts, an awareness of what that support had accomplished to date, and a commitment to continuing and building that support in future years.

Our project was designed to address these goals on several levels. On one, we contracted with Jasculca/Terman and Associates, Inc., a Chicago-based public relations firm specializing in public affairs and government relations, to research the nature and status of support for public arts funding in our region, and to design a plan for building that support at the grassroots level. A second tier of the project was focused on investing in the communications and organizational infrastructure of the participating arts advocacy organizations and state arts agencies so that they would be better able

to utilize the findings and recommended strategies resulting from Jasculca/Terman's work.

These goals and tasks were all defined at the close of 1988, and the project was underway in 1989. During the ensuing two years, the arts landscape, especially *vis à vis* the relationship between public funding and the arts, changed dramatically. Confronted almost simultaneously with questions about the appropriateness of public support for artwork that some might find offensive and the effects of an economic recession and state government deficits, arts advocates have been challenged to coalesce their supporters not simply to *build* public funding support for the arts, but to defend its very existence!

It is sometimes frustrating to recall that our original goal in this project was to design a plan which would help the arts, and public support for the arts, grow and flourish. Public funding for the arts in the participating states has not achieved significant growth, and in some cases it has declined. Yet despite frightening challenges and attacks, the concept of public support for the arts — together with the state arts agencies themselves — has survived. This survival has resulted from myriad efforts, but key among them in each case is this: an expansive, committed, motivated, grassroots constituency clearly communicated their support for the arts to their legislators and governors. They let it be known that the arts were important, and that they, as tax-paying voters, were watching the actions of their elected officials.

This report, developed by Jasculca/Terman, in cooperation with the project's arts advocates and state arts agencies, provides a blueprint of sorts for building such a coalition of supporters. It is a blueprint with some tried and true strategies borrowed from political organizing efforts. But the key to the report is the concept of thinking strategically and comprehensively about building a base for public arts support. An effective framework simply cannot be constructed by using only one or two strategies. There are forty recommendations in this report and, ideally, each of them will find a role in your public advocacy plan.

It is still our belief that the original goal for this project as conceived by the Ameritech Foundation more than three years ago, that of building public arts support and funding in our region, is one we will be able to address. The arts community will not always be fighting for its survival. If we work to implement this plan now, when the time for growth comes, our organizations will already have in place a stronger connection with their communities, with other partner organizations committed to community life, and with government leaders. With such a coalition as a base, we will be able to commit our unified resources on what is finally the effort that the Ameritech Foundation hoped we could — building a better cultural environment throughout our country.

Preface

The last few years have demonstrated to us in the arts that we can actively respond to crisis. Threats to continuing government funding on the federal level and immediately following on the state and local levels sensitized us to advocacy, uniting us in new and effective ways. We hunkered down with strategists and mapped out campaigns that brought success, albeit limited.

Now as the final votes are being taken and we assess our battered budgets and a plan for the long-term is considered — this is the time to seriously examine and take up the strategies laid out in these pages. If anything, the recent past has taught us that a single annual event at the capitol or a massive letter-writing campaign are not enough to assure the rightful place for the arts among government's priorities. Well crafted messages, carefully developed lists, active committees, field leadership and coalitions are just some of the components of an ongoing program that extends throughout the years.

As we review those recommendations and others detailed in the report, we find our challenge. The world is changing too rapidly, societal needs are expanding. We can no longer afford anything but a fully developed, multi-layered, highly visible program for arts advocacy.

Our appreciation to the Ameritech Foundation for giving the five states in their region an opportunity to assess our needs in arts advocacy and move through the enlightening process that produced this report. Our regular meeting around these issues under the excellent assistance of consultants from Jasculca/Terman was a luxury of planning not often made available to us in the field. This report will now serve as our handbook in Illinois and I hope other states find in it advocacy tools for the long haul.

Alene Valkanas, Executive Director
Illinois Arts Alliance

Introduction

The 1990s began like a blast of arctic air for the arts world, with an increasing number of political figures and organizations united to freeze out public support. This intensifying assault can either crush public support or galvanize a long-dormant community that is just now coming to terms with the need for a long-term commitment to political action.

The evidence shows that the arts world is rising to the challenge, nationally and in the Midwest. But there is much work to be done. The goal of this report is to focus on the needs identified through this project, and propose specific actions that can be taken to establish the kind of political action needed to maintain and increase public funding.

A common thread running through this report is the need to broaden and strengthen the base of support for public funding by fostering better cooperation among arts organizations and by reaching out to new allies. Our analysis found that too often, arts groups were working at cross-purposes, and failed to present a united and focused campaign in the state capitals.

According to the analysis we compiled in the fall of 1989, the states were beginning to make at least some headway in one of the two most effective ways to influence elected officials: mobilizing constituents to take political action, and direct statehouse lobbying. But even in the states that were furthest along in developing these capabilities — and which likely have progressed still further in the intervening months because of the National Endowment for the Arts reauthorization call to action — additional measures are needed.

This report proposes 40 specific steps that can be taken to strengthen arts advocacy efforts. Some of these steps can be taken immediately, others may take time. Given financial constraints, we have tried to develop basic, common-sense activities that do not require huge outlays of cash. They *may* require substantial outlays of time, however. To the extent any of these proposals call for spending significant amounts of money, we recommend securing outside funding if possible.

Some of these actions already have been taken in some states, but no state has done all of these things. We view this report as an effort to put down in one document a comprehensive, focused statewide advocacy campaign. The activities we propose, while grouped in five categories, are meant to be linked with one another in a synergistic action agenda. It will be up to the states to carry out these recommendations with staff and volunteer help, or seek funding for professional public affairs and political counsel to accomplish them.

These strategies are based on the philosophy that once the arts world has stepped into the political arena, it must make a commitment for the long term if it hopes to be successful. It is also based on the principle that while the message is important, it is more important in this case to devote time and energy to create many messengers. We will not always persuade legislators or political constituencies outside the arts world that public funding of the arts is inherently worthy of their support. Instead, we need to demonstrate that public funding of the arts is important because it is so meaningful to so many people — and has an *impact* on the lives of so many.

Case Statement

The arts are invaluable for the development of the human spirit and our national culture. Few other disciplines accept and reward such great diversity. By inviting free expression, the arts seek to instill creativity and the development of unique spirits. No matter the background of its practitioners or audience, the arts bridge cultural differences and offer a sanctuary for individual thought and discourse. The arts provide a common ground for people and one of the few threads of continuity over time. Yet the arts never cease to renew, illuminate, educate and entertain.

If not performed in theaters or concert halls or exhibited in museums or galleries, the arts can be seen in the design of buildings or the bluegrass festival down the road. The arts are interwoven into the very fabric of our lives and our society. The creativity fostered and nurtured in the arts can be applied in so many other aspects of life. Executing and completing a project, for example, are skills usually first learned while making art in the pre-school years.

Few would dispute that the arts are good. But that is not enough. Good is not an argument that always persuades legislators, who need to see tangible results and constituent interest. And the ultimate goal is not to float elegant arguments about the importance of the arts. It is to persuade the people with the purse strings: those in a position to elevate the arts to a top legislative priority.

The challenge is to find ways — tested and new, conventional and creative, basic and bold — to increase the number of people for whom the arts are important. It is imperative that people understand the value their tax dollars have in public support of the arts — what that very small percentage of state and national budgets does for their local communities. Efforts must be focused on the millions of people who believe in public support of the arts but neglect to express their support publicly. The mission is to galvanize these people to voice their support to those decisionmakers who help determine the level and intensity of public funding for the arts.

The time for action is now. The arts community, mobilized by the crisis over arts censorship, has already begun to heed the call. But the political techniques that must be implemented are not only for crises. Working for public funds means participating in the political arena, where the techniques for conveying an argument can be as important as the argument itself.

The current climate for the arts may be difficult, with the Reagan-era philosophy of budget-cutting still prevalent and an increasing antagonism toward public funding of the arts. But this crisis atmosphere can be seen as an opportunity. Rather than just respond defensively with a bunker mentality, the arts community needs to reach out and build an enduring coalition of allies. It is time to carry out a sound, proactive strategy to prepare for the inevitable crises, avoid crisis when possible and lay the groundwork for a prosperous future.

As one lobbyist outside the arts community noted: "Good organization will always get you something. Well-organized bad causes will do better than poorly organized good causes." Imagine what a well-organized *good* cause can accomplish.

No one would willingly give up the arts. Unfortunately, it is painfully clear that they are taken for granted by much of the population. Nowhere is this more evident than in the severe shortage of arts education in the schools. If children are taught to appreciate and savor the arts when young, they are much more likely to grow up to value the arts and advocate on their behalf. The arts community must embrace the issues of arts

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

education to ensure the future of the arts. As arts champion Leonard Garment said in a recent speech: "If arts organizations choose to devote a preponderant part of their efforts to the project of education, they will find themselves part of a new coalition that is much broader than the old one... a coalition not for the arts or the sciences or the teachers alone, but for the children of America."

There is hope and optimism *IF* the arts community is willing to take its destiny into its own hands...

IF there is a willingness to forge new relationships and partnerships rather than expend energy fighting old enemies or merely reacting to crises...

IF there is a determination to use the political process effectively rather than be victimized by it...

IF internal rifts and divisions can be supplanted by a unified voice, vision and sense of mission... and

IF a sound strategy can be translated into effective action.

The arts community is well aware of the dangers it faces; however, it does not always see or act upon opportunities to take the initiative. To become empowered, the arts community must make its inherent diversity work for, not against, itself — and toward establishing a coordinated, ongoing campaign.

This case statement includes suggestions gleaned from extensive interviews with people of very different backgrounds and perspectives about how the arts can become one of those few unbeatable, well-organized good causes.

A comprehensive political and public relations strategy that embodies the principles enunciated in this case statement follows.

Situation Analysis

Obstacles

Cooperation

- The inherent diversity of the arts is perhaps its greatest strength, but it also presents one of the most formidable obstacles to establishing coordination among all levels of arts supporters. Agreeing on a set of goals and then working together to achieve them has unfortunately been more the exception than the rule in the arts community.

- State arts councils and the advocacy groups that lobby for council funding too often take divergent positions.

- The arts community is itself stratified, with arts organizations and artists often at odds with each other.

- The system for funding arts institutions can generate frustration and resentment between urban and rural, big city and smaller city, and large and small institutions. This divisiveness can hamper organizing.

Organization

- The arts have not dispersed power across the state, relative to both arts funding and lobbying. If local arts organizations do not feel empowered, they are less likely to advocate.

- Most campaigns geared toward building support for the arts have started at the top and dissipated every step along the way as they sought to have an impact in local communities. There have been remarkably few attempts to generate a groundswell of grassroots support from which to construct a coordinated statewide effort.

- The arts community is driven by crises rather than a public action plan which employs ongoing political techniques.

Advocacy

- In many cases, the outreach facet of advocacy is neglected in favor of relying solely on statehouse lobbying, instead of using constituency mobilization as an effective component of lobbying.

- Artists do not want to advocate, yet legislators want to hear from artists.

Outreach

- Too much emphasis has been placed on Eurocentric arts, and too little attention has been paid to ethnically diverse programming, resulting in a lack of outreach to minority communities.

- Too many people feel alienated from or intimidated by the arts because they lack arts education or do not understand the relevance of the arts to their lives. And because so few children are receiving adequate arts education, the task of broadening future audiences becomes more difficult.

Biases

- Many perceive that private dollars can support the arts because so many of the powerful and rich are members of arts organizations' boards of directors.

- Among many outside the arts community, there is a philosophical opposition, well beyond apathy, to government support of the arts.

- Arts supporters are often naive about — and even disdainful of — the political and legislative processes.

- There is a widespread perception that the arts are elitist.

- There is a legislative tendency to play off the arts against social needs, such as health, education and welfare.

Opportunities

Cooperation

- Compromise behind closed doors to avoid a public split in the arts community.

The arts community does not have to agree, but supporters should be made to understand the importance of working together to achieve common goals.

- Maintain open lines of communication among arts organizations.

Cooperation among members of the arts community eliminates duplication and counterproductive efforts.

- Show power, not arrogance.

A willingness to compromise is more effective with a legislator than insisting arts funding is a divine right.

Organization

- Establish a comprehensive network of arts supporters across the state, one that builds increased public support for the arts, exerts an ongoing influence on local, state and nationally elected representatives and rises to any occasion.

A comprehensive field organization is politically powerful.

- Enlist the expertise of arts institutions across the state.

By virtue of their own membership development, they are grassroots organizers.

- Educate arts supporters about the importance of public funding to gain their support and involvement in advocacy efforts.

An informed and vocal constituency can help professional lobbyists deliver a message much more effectively.

- Use resources wisely, selectively and in a targeted, coordinated manner.

Do not waste political pull.

- Develop a focused, goal-oriented approach to maximize visibility and impact.

One well-coordinated statewide campaign is more effective than several disconnected attempts that reveal fragmentation, not organization.

- Simplify the message.

Be specific and concise.

- Present a positive winning image and demonstrate the relevance of the arts in daily — private and commercial — life.

People gravitate to winning causes; good organization allows a cause to gain momentum, necessary for broadening a base of support.

Advocacy

- Mobilize board members to take up the cause of advocacy for the arts as well as that of their own institutions.

By adding the arts to their agenda when lobbying legislators, community leaders from business and industry will demonstrate that the arts have clout.

- Motivate the general membership of arts institutions to participate in advocacy efforts.

Political influence is attained not only by having prominent supporters but also by mobilizing large numbers of people to rally around a particular issue.

- Develop a legislative strategy that recognizes the importance of knowing which buttons to push and how to push them to motivate support of the arts.

Legislators listen most carefully to their constituents, especially if a block of them show their voting — and

fund-raising — power at election time.

- Communicate individually with legislators and make them personally aware of the arts in their districts.

Legislators want to hear from grant recipients. They are moved specifically by what the grants enable artists or arts groups to do.

- Talk numbers, such as the numbers of dollars the arts generate in a community or the number of constituents favoring an arts project.

Tangible arguments are more effective with legislators than ephemeral quality-of-life issues.

- Utilize children as message bearers for the arts.

A legislator finds it very difficult to tell children to their faces that the state will stop supporting arts education.

- Emphasize the impact of local arts organizations on the community.

Arts, like advocacy and politics, are local.

- Involve the arts community in the political process in a proactive, not defensive or antagonistic way.

Advocacy is not a frill. It is elemental to the mission of any artist, supporter, patron, board member or arts manager.

- Educate people about art and use arts as a more proactive educational tool.

Advocacy is education. Education is advocacy.

- Enlist the support of artists in arts advocacy.

Artists, by the nature of what they do, advocate. Their efforts, properly focused and channelled, can be compelling.

Outreach

- Involve all segments of the population with multi-cultural exhibits.

The more diverse and inclusive the arts community is shown to be, the more visible the cause and the greater the impact of the arguments.

- Demonstrate to other constituencies how the arts affect them and their members. Articulate your common goals. Anticipate problems or conflicts before they arise.

Long-term linkages with other interests broaden constituencies and widen the reach of the arts.

- Work more closely with education groups to identify and reach common goals.

Children who grow up sensitive to and participating in the arts form a cadre of future arts participants and, more importantly, arts advocates.

Biases

- Introduce people to the arts at their own personal level: Bring the "high" arts down to earth.

Arts outside of the big cities should be recognized as just as significant as the arts within metropolitan areas.

- Convey the powerful role of the arts in social services.

The arts offer opportunities for personal growth and economic advancement that might not otherwise be available to underprivileged or special-needs youth.

Goals

- Develop a broad-based grassroots field organization — composed of arts administrators, board members, artists and patrons — that can be activated to promote the arts on a long-term basis as well as counter attacks from those who would like to see funding cut or eliminated. Individual artists, in particular, need to be persuaded in greater numbers to engage in grassroots political activity to preserve and expand public funding for the arts.

- Increase the number, and broaden the community, of people and organizations that support public funding for the arts.

- Mobilize this broadened constituency.

- Develop natural linkages with other interests, such as education and tourism, to promote cooperative efforts on behalf of the arts.

- Demonstrate on a continuing basis publicly and visibly how the arts play a fundamental role in our individual lives and society as a whole and, therefore, deserve nurturing through "seed money" from government grants.

Strategies

There are five primary areas of recommended activity in this strategy:

- **State-by-State Action Plans**
- **Internal Organization and Communications**
- **Constituency Outreach and Mobilization**
- **Government Outreach**
- **Publicity**

The obvious question is, "Who does these things?" Primary responsibility for carrying out the arts impact strategy should rest with the state advocacy organization. Its advocacy mission by charter makes it the natural source of leadership to organize the diverse arts organizations across the state for both short- and long-term efforts.

We recommend that each state advocacy organization use these recommendations as a starting point, and develop its own written gameplan and mission statement tailored to its unique needs.

State-By-State Action Plans

State-specific Action Plan: Using this overall strategy as a point of reference, we recommend that each state develop a written action plan, tailored to its unique needs, for achieving the goals of maintaining and increasing public funding of the arts. This action plan is the thread that holds together the series of activities recommended in this strategy document and which establishes linkages between them. The development of this plan should be the initial activity of the political and public affairs task force described in #2 of the following section. The action plan should list:

- State-specific goals, such as the passage or defeat of particular legislation, recruitment of advocacy group members, winning support of interest groups, targeting legislators for support or opposition in campaigns, or others
- Specific activities
- A timeline for achieving them
- The messages that the state's arts community wants to communicate
- Division of responsibilities
- A budget for carrying out the plan's objectives

Internal Organization & Communications

1. *Database:* You'll need several basic kinds of information, including:

- A directory of state legislators and members of Congress. These are published by major interest groups, lobbying firms and others.
- A master list of arts council grants corresponding to legislative districts.
- A zip code directory cross-indexing zip codes with legislative and congressional districts.
- A master membership list for arts organizations (including their board members) across the state for purposes of political organizing, not fund-raising. This should be made clear at the outset so that arts organizations will not be concerned about handing over proprietary fund-raising information.

- A list of non-arts affiliated organizations and interest groups that either could be considered natural allies or that could be allies either because they perceive a self-interest or simply because they agree philosophically with public funding.

- A list of 25 to 50 influential individuals, from all walks of life, who potentially could be recruited to support the arts publicly. There probably are civic leaders, doctors, lawyers, civil rights leaders, sports figures and others who could be effective spokespersons either publicly or privately with individual legislators and members of Congress.

- A statewide media list, including daily and weekly newspapers, newspaper chains, radio and TV stations (including cable). The list should indicate appropriate personnel such as managing editors; arts, business and local government reporters; feature writers; state-house correspondents; editorial writers; editors of "letters to the editor" and commentary (op-ed) pieces; and public service or community relations directors (broadcast media).

2. *Steering Committee/Arts Task Force:* Set up a small task force of your most politically and media-savvy people to coordinate the execution of your gameplan. A critical role of this group is to achieve a cohesion of purpose among arts advocacy groups across the state and, therefore, improve their effectiveness. The task force should be small, but big enough to be representative of the major interests in your arts community. For example, the task force might include the director of the state's advocacy organization, a public affairs person from a major corporation active in the arts, a political consultant or public relations agency executive, a representative from one of the state's large arts institutions, a representative of a community arts organization, and an artist. This task force should meet regularly, and in this way focus statewide advocacy efforts, coordinate them and organize to head off problems before they become crises.

3. *Field Organization:* Designate a field coordinator in each legislative district to manage contacts with the particular representative or senator and organize grassroots political mobilization. Each field coordinator should establish a mobilization committee that is geographically and demographically diverse and can generate on-demand political activity — phone calls, letters to legislators, visits to district offices, etc. This field coordinator could be one of any number of people — an arts teacher, a patron, a community activist, the director of a local arts agency, a business executive, etc. The one common denominator should be experience in the political arena.

4. *Board Member Advocates:* Encourage arts organizations to recruit additional members to their boards of directors for the purposes of arts advocacy. These board members should play a more active role in advocating for the arts as well as for their individual institutions. Boards should represent a broad demographic, geographic and political cross-section of representation. In considering potential nominees, emphasize the ability of the prospective board member to be an effective advocate in the political arena. Also, don't just select people who are perceived to have clout with the governor or leading legislators because of personal friendship. Choose people who bring with them access to large numbers of people, such as heads of unions, professional organizations, clergy associations and other highly visible organization leaders. Provide advocacy training for board members, and assign them individual legislators. Insist that board members assume an active supporting role during arts funding crises.

5. *Staff Assistance:* Recruit undergraduate and graduate students from nearby colleges and universities to assist in communications and grassroots organizing efforts. This recommendation recognizes that hiring new staff may not be realistic, but that additional help is needed to accomplish what needs to be done. You can probably work out an internship program with a teacher or professor, so the program has some structure and the students can count the internship toward course credits. Another approach to this situation would be to seek *pro bono* assistance from a large public relations firm. But it is often difficult to get a consistent commitment of time on this basis. Still another approach to this challenge would be to seek private funding specifically earmarked for hiring advocacy staff or an outside public relations firm.

6. *Political Action Committee:* Like it or not, the arts community needs to make itself heard through contributions to legislators who are philosophically attuned to the issue of public funding of the arts. Or, it may be necessary to work against lawmakers who consistently vote against public funding. Each state advocacy group should seek counsel from an

election-law attorney and establish a political action committee.

7. *Awareness Month:* Establish an "Arts Impact Month" to provide focus and concentrate advocacy efforts for greater impact, and to determine a set time period around which to rally local arts organizations. Consider establishing this impact month during the final month of the legislative efforts, so the increased visibility will be noticed by lawmakers during the time they are putting together the state budget. This annual period of activity should include your Arts Awareness Day and rally at the Capitol, and a legislative reception. The activity could also include a statewide media tour featuring a celebrity or other prominent arts spokesperson who can eloquently make the case for public funding.

8. *Arts Alert:* Develop an "Arts Alert" mechanism for quickly notifying and mobilizing arts supporters throughout the state on important legislation coming up for a vote. Whether through a telephone tree, mailgrams or other means, notify arts supporters about the upcoming vote and ask them to contact their local legislator. Provide the name, address and phone number of the legislator. If using a mailgram, create a bold, eye-catching format that will let supporters know this is something requiring their immediate attention. These alerts must be sent out far enough in advance to allow constituents time to mobilize.

Community Outreach & Mobilization

1. *Allied Interests:* Using the master list recommended in section 1, above, establish a card file of potential supporters outside the immediate arts community. Assign clusters of these groups to members of your political task force, or members of your board, and begin making contacts. Ask if you can meet with leaders of the group to tell them about your organization and explore possible areas of mutual interest. Invite the groups or their members to join your state's arts advocacy organization. This mutual interest is key, because you can't depend on groups outside the arts community to support public funding on the basis of philosophical agreement. It helps to find bottom-line reasons why that group should care about your issues.

For example, the state teachers' unions should care because their members include art teachers; and parent-teacher organizations will recognize the value of visiting artists to local schools. Labor unions should care because their membership may include members of musicians or technicians' unions. Business groups should care because the arts can encourage economic development, and because arts education during school years can help create business leaders who are more effective presenters. Neighborhood economic development organizations will care because community arts organizations help stimulate revitalization of urban or rural communities.

A variety of organizations should share your interest in free speech issues, such as library associations, civil libertarians and booksellers. Mental health associations will appreciate the value of art as therapy. Similarly, senior citizens organizations recognize that art can help seniors lead meaningful lives, and that arts performances by local groups frequently entertain seniors' groups. Civil rights organizations appreciate the value of the arts as one way for minorities to escape urban blight.

2. *Speakers' Bureau:* Make a list of effective speakers on behalf of the arts, and begin scheduling them for speaking engagements to major associations and groups across the state. Perhaps this could be one result of your initial outreach meetings. This requires a systematic effort to seek out opportunities; you can't just wait for the groups to contact you. Prepare written abstracts of the topic to be covered by your speaker, and use it to help market the program. Prepare talking points for the speakers, so their remarks are consistent with your statewide arts advocacy message. While issues may vary locally across the state, there should be a consistent message in these speaking engagements about the value of public funding of the arts.

3. *Advocacy Workshops:* Organize workshops or "teach-ins" for artists and community arts organizations to teach advocacy skills. You might invite political organizers from other groups, such as the state teachers' union, chamber of commerce, manufacturers association or medical society to lead these sessions. Bringing in a panel of top lobbyists, even if you have to pay them honoraria, would also help build relationships with other interest groups.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

4. *Advocacy Handbook:* Develop a written arts advocacy guide that can be used for leading local advocacy workshops by arts groups throughout the state. While a booklet is not a substitute for person-to-person contact among arts organizations, it can help to provide every arts supporter in the state with a grounding in certain fundamentals of advocacy, and also help ensure consistency of effort statewide. With a list of how-tos, many arts organizations could easily begin to lay the groundwork in their communities for a statewide field organization that can be tapped for grassroots lobbying.

5. *Crisis Communications Training:* Retain a seasoned public affairs consultant to conduct crisis communications training for arts organizations and institutions across the state. This training will be focused on helping institutions and organizations prepare for public controversies surrounding exhibits or performances.

6. *Motivational Video:* Both for the purposes of revving up your existing army of arts advocates, and to recruit new supporters, create a 10-minute video documentary illustrating how publicly funded arts projects have an impact on people's lives. This piece should reflect the diversity of the state, ethnically and geographically, and the range of arts opportunities. It should also have substantial footage of kids practicing or enjoying art to underscore the linkage between arts and education. You should be able to depend to an extent on existing artistic talent in your state, but expect to spend $12,000 to $20,000 on this project. Obviously, outside funding is a must.

Government Outreach

1. *Grant Awards:* Put some thought into how state grants are announced, to make the most of this opportunity to show the linkage between a legislator and the beneficiary of the state funding. For example, work with the press offices of the respective parties in each legislative chamber, so that the lawmaker can put out his or her own news release announcing the grant at the same time the arts council makes its announcement. You might also arrange for legislators who support the arts to award grants in a public forum where they can publicly be thanked. Arrange a photo opportunity with a news release for legislators announcing grants, and make sure the picture gets to the legislator's hometown media. Follow through on this initial activity by documenting the results of the grants and getting that information to legislators. For example, 250 elementary school students learned about dance or public speaking as a result of the local artist-in-residence program.

2. *Grantee Thanks:* Request that grantees write thank-you letters to their local state representatives, explaining what the grants have enabled them to do. This should be presented as an opportunity for artists to do their part for arts advocacy, not as a condition for grants. This simple gesture of appreciation can help legislators understand the role of arts funding and why it is important to the life of their own home communities. Similarly, arrange for thank-you letters from those who may have enjoyed a production funded in part through public dollars. For example, a class of kids that enjoyed a dance production at their school could send a letter.

3. *Art Competitions:* Work with state legislators to sponsor arts competitions in their districts for elementary and high school students. Works of winners from each district can be shown at a statehouse exhibit, where lawmakers will be reminded of the importance of the arts — and public funds for the arts.

4. *Legislator Appreciation Day:* Establish a Legislator Appreciation Day for arts organizations within each legislator's district, and arrange an event to publicly thank lawmakers who support the arts.

5. *Legislative or Governor's Awards:* This is something many states do, but should be included in any list of recommended activities. This is an opportunity for the arts community to award legislators and other elected officials who have been especially supportive of the arts. A note of caution: if there are several legislators who are active in support of the arts, you don't want to alienate any of them by singling out one. Either give out several awards, or give out a few if there are a few legislators who clearly stand out.

6. *Fund-raisers:* Arts organizations could host political fund-raisers for legislative supporters. For example, invite a dozen to 20 local patrons to a breakfast for a senator or representative, and have them each make a contribution then or buy tickets ahead of time. All proceeds would go to the politician's campaign fund. There are more elaborate forms of fund-raisers, but this smaller

forum would be a great way for the legislator to meet individually with arts supporters and discuss the issue in some detail.

7. *Legislative Ratings:* Many special interest groups rate legislators each year on how they voted on issues important to that group. The arts advocacy community should do likewise.

8. *Public Opinion Survey:* Polling and focus groups of registered voters can measure public support for this issue and suggest ways to craft arguments to elicit the best response. The value of a good public opinion poll is not so much its measurement of "yes" and "no" responses, but in what it can tell about why people feel the way they do. By understanding those reasons, you can be more effective in developing appropriate political strategies and in communicating your message in ways that are meaningful to the citizens who vote for the legislators you ultimately are seeking to persuade. In addition to its value for strategic planning, a public opinion survey can also be released publicly if the results are favorable to the cause, generating additional awareness. A basic random sample statewide telephone survey would likely cost $20,000 or more, so this is another candidate for outside sponsorship.

9. *Artists as Political Volunteers:* Arrange for artists to get involved in election campaigns for supportive legislators, by performing at fund-raisers, staffing telephone banks, helping with petition drives or designing brochures and posters. Involving your members personally and directly in campaigns is a great way to earn the gratitude of a legislator and keep your cause fresh in his or her mind.

10. *Voter Registration:* Organize voter registration drives at large arts events, and otherwise seek to build the number of registered voters in the arts community. One of the things legislators look at when they get a letter or a phone call or a petition is whether the people lobbying them are actually registered to vote. If not, the point of view carries less weight. A particularly successful voter registration drive would be worth promoting publicly. You might consider having several organizations in your state conduct voter registration drives for a set time period, to demonstrate the impact this effort will have. The announcement alone would likely score some political points.

11. *Legislative Advocates:* Make sure to put a legislator or two on your advocacy board, possibly as an honorary member. This will allow you to receive continual feedback about the attitudes in the legislature to enable you to properly address them and persuade the lawmakers on the fence. Make sure to meet with these legislators regularly, not just when a crisis is looming or a bill is up for a vote.

12. *Arts Caucus:* Encourage the establishment of an arts caucus in the legislature. While many states already have selected legislators they rely on to advocate for the arts, the creation of an actual caucus — even if only informal in nature — could drive arts advocacy more vigorously.

13. *Legislative Invitations:* Make sure legislators are invited to significant arts events in their districts that receive public dollars. The invitation should be followed up on the phone by a local opinion leader, who can let the lawmaker know that he or she will have the opportunity to talk with a number of important people who will be attending the opening (or whatever the event is).

14. *Local Resolutions:* Encourage municipal and county governing bodies to pass resolutions endorsing public funding of the arts, focusing on local arts groups. A series of such resolutions within a given legislative district would carry weight, as legislators often pay heed to what their local governments say.

15. *Advocacy Inserts:* Routinely include information in programs distributed at performances and exhibits, explaining that a state grant helped make the event possible. The insert should encourage the patron to send a letter to the local legislator letting them know how much the performance was enjoyed. Include the addresses and phone numbers of the appropriate legislators. The insert could also invite the patron to become more active in the state's advocacy effort.

16. *Budget Testimonials:* Arrange for testimonials at budget hearings to humanize the grant process and show how individual lives have been touched by public funding. For example, arrange for a couple of artists to testify (pick them well), as well as a young student who benefitted from having a visiting artist at school for a week.

17. *Arts Advocacy Day:* Working closely with your

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

field organizers, arrange to have scores of arts advocates descend on the statehouse on the day designated as Arts Impact Day in your state. Schedule a couple of performances, preferably by youth groups, to show "your tax dollars at work" (you might even erect a sign to that effect, like they do with road construction projects). Advocates — especially individual artists — should schedule one-on-one meetings beforehand with their hometown legislators. Try to get artworks or performances from as many districts as possible.

Publicity

1. *Name that Campaign:* Once you've put together your state's advocacy gameplan, give it a name and announce it publicly. That will help demonstrate that you're serious about generating increased public funding of the arts, and likely attract volunteers and contributors who read about your effort.

2. *Media Information Kit:* Prepare a basic media information kit that includes a fact sheet about your organization, how the arts are funded in your state and levels of funding, a one-page position paper on why public funding is important, a background piece on the link between arts and education, a list of grant recipients with brief descriptions of their projects, brief profiles of people whose lives have been touched by public funding (or testimonial quotes) and a list of designated spokespersons with names and numbers. Working with the field coordinators, prepare a district-by-district breakdown of arts activities, especially publicly funded ones. This will allow you to localize the information kit as needed.

3. *Meet the Media:* Once you've compiled the master media list described under "Internal Organization & Communications," set out to meet these media folk through letters, phone calls, individual briefings and other means. This does not guarantee positive coverage, but you need to build a relationship and establish yourself as a credible source. Out of sight is out of mind.

4. *Spokespersons:* Designate a small team (three or four people) of designated spokespersons for this issue in your state. In this way you can help ensure consistency of message. Either as a pro bono project or for a modest fee, arrange media training for these people with a local public relations firm.

5. *PSAs:* While radio and TV public service announcements have limited value given the time of day they usually air, they are another weapon in your arsenal of ways to gain visibility for your issue. Assuming the cost is minimal (and consider focusing on radio), prepare a cluster of public service announcements promoting support for the arts. Make sure to feature kids enjoying the arts, both as participants and audiences. These PSAs will probably need to be generic in urging support for the arts, because TV stations aren't likely to accept a PSA that is advocating one side of a controversial issue.

6. *Arts Impact Statements:* One of the constant challenges for arts advocates is jockeying for position among the many social causes that legislators generally find more compelling — education, welfare, mental health, corrections, etc. One way to demonstrate that the arts in fact are woven throughout the fabric of a state budget would be to prepare an Arts Impact Statement in conjunction with the state budget. This document would list several state agencies, and describe in each case how the arts play a role in that agency's missions. For example, art is used as therapy for mental health and corrections. It's used in schools to teach kids a variety of necessary skills; and it's part of the state's economic development efforts.

7. *Op-eds and Letters to the Editor:* Prepare newspaper commentary, or "op-ed" pieces on the importance of public funding of the arts. To be most effective, these should be signed by third parties who aren't necessarily identified with the arts — a business executive or civic leader, for example. Unless the author is someone of statewide note, newspapers generally prefer a local author. Circulate reprints to legislators. Letters to the editor can serve the same purpose on a somewhat smaller scale.

8. *Feature Stories:* Coordinate with arts organizations around the state how they can disseminate to local media the positive arts stories generated within their groups. A steady flow of feature stories will keep the arts in the public eye in a positive, non-controversial light.

9. *Talk Shows:* Schedule your spokespersons on TV and radio talk shows, to make the case for public funding. Call the station first and find out who produces the show, and then contact that person with a well-rehearsed "sales pitch" aimed at getting

your spokesperson booked on that show. Consider timing when scheduling these public affairs and talk shows, so that the publicity you get relates to specific strategic goals, such as passage of the appropriation or the governor's budget address.

10. *Ad Buys:* Sometimes it's difficult to get the news media to focus on the positive success stories you may have to offer. Consider asking a supportive corporation to take out a full- or half-page ad telling the story of an individual whose life has been touched by publicly funded art — either as an artist or someone who has otherwise benefited from the arts.

Conclusion

The case statement, situation analysis, and 40 specific steps outlined in this report provide a blueprint for action for building a better cultural environment in the Midwest and beyond. But having a blueprint doesn't mean the foundation will be poured or the building will be built. A blueprint is the first step, a call to action if you will. This report, although aimed primarily at state arts advocacy organizations, includes strategies each of us can use. Select one or two and begin now. If you haven't already done so, join your state arts advocacy organization and support their efforts. Offer to help them implement these strategies. Let local, state, and national elected officials know that you know it is your tax dollars that help make the arts events you enjoy happen in your community. The key to success is to create many messengers. Be an effective messenger and voice your support for the arts today, and everyday.

Resources

Local, State, and National Arts Advocacy Organizations

American Arts Alliance
1319 "F" Street NW Suite 500
Washington, DC 20004-1151
202/737-1727
Anne G. Murphy

American Council for the Arts (ACA)
1285 Sixth Avenue, 3rd floor
New York, NY 10019
212/245-4510
Linwood Oglesby

Concerned Citizens for the Arts in Michigan
230 E. Grand River, Suite 201
Detroit, MI 48226
313/961-1776
Marilyn Wheaton

Greater Chicago Citizens for the Arts
c/o Thomas Tresser
1150 N. Lakeshore Drive
Chicago, IL 60611
312/280-1025

Illinois Arts Alliance Foundation
67 East Madison, Suite 2113
Chicago, IL 60603
312/855-3105
Alene Valkanas

Indiana Advocates for the Arts
PO Box 441250
Indianapolis, IN 46244-1250
317/638-3984
Carole R. Darst

Iowa Arts Coalition
624 5th Street SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
319/398-5322
Anne Bergren

Minnesota Citizens for the Arts
708 N. First Street, Suite 235D
Minneapolis, MN 55401-1145
612/338-2970
Pam Perri

National Cultural Alliance
1225 "I" Street, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005
202/289-8286
Kathy Southern

North Dakota Arts Alliance
PO Box 2292
Bismarck, ND 58502

Ohio Citizens Committee for the Arts
1001 Market Avenue North
Canton, OH 44702
216/455-4409
William Blair

South Dakotans for the Arts
PO Box 472
Deadwood, SD 57732
605/578-1783
Janet Brown

State Arts Advocacy League of America (SAALA)
c/o 10 Johnson Road
Foster, RI 02825
401/397-2534
Simone P. Joyaux

Wisconsin Citizens for the Arts
PO Box 1812
Madison, WI 53701
608/251-0471
Sue Kaestner

Arts Midwest

528 Hennepin Avenue

Suite 310

Minneapolis

Minnesota 55403